

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A surface inspecting apparatus for inspecting a shape of a surface to be inspected of an object to be inspected comprising:

a supporting unit capable of supporting the object in a

5 state in which the surface is in a substantially vertical state; and

a moving unit which moves the object in a substantially vertical direction while the inspected surface is maintained in the substantially vertical state.

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2. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the supporting unit includes a supporting member which supports a lower end of the object in the state in which the surface is in the substantially vertical state, and

15 wherein the moving unit lifts the object until the lower end of the object is separated from the supporting member and thereafter lowers the object until the lower end of the object abuts on the supporting member.

20 3. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the supporting member has an elastic member provided at a portion where the lower end of the object abuts.

4. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 1,  
25 wherein the moving unit suspends the object by holding at least one of an upper portion and a side portion of the object.

5. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 4,  
wherein the moving unit adjusts suspending force in accordance  
with gravity of the object.

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6. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 5,  
wherein the moving unit suspends the object with substantially  
half of the gravity of the object.

10 7. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein the supporting unit is capable of supporting the object  
in a state in which the surface is inclined with respect to the  
vertical direction by 0 to 4 degrees.

15 8. A surface inspecting apparatus for inspecting a shape of  
a surface to be inspected of an object to be inspected comprising:  
a supporting unit capable of supporting the object in a  
state in which the inspected surface is in a substantially vertical  
state; and

20 a suspending unit which suspends the object while the  
inspected surface is maintained in the substantially vertical  
state.

25 9. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 8,  
wherein the suspending unit adjusts suspending force in  
accordance with gravity of the object.

10. The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 9,  
wherein the suspending unit suspends the object with  
substantially half of the gravity of the object.